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ABSTRACT

The transfer rates of students in the Peralta Community College District (PCCD) are examined in the context of statewide and local transfer and enrollment rates. After introductory material citing the low transfer rate of California community college (CCC) students to California State Univeristy or University of California Schools (i.e., 2.6% of total fall 1981 enrollment), factors lowering the CCC transfer rate are identified; e.g., changing student goals which cause students to enter employment when they have acquired necessary skills, rather than pursue additional education; statistical compilations which exclude data on transfer to independent and out-of-state institutions; changing student characteristics; and the limited ability of four-year public institutions to handle a substantial increase in community college transfers. Next, the transfer rates of the PCCD colleges are compared with other Bay Area community colleges. The report then examines the transfer rates of various ethnic groups in the PCCD, revealing that fewer Blacks and more Whites transfer than are represented on the district's campuses, while Asians and Hispanics transfer roughly in proportion to their campus representation. Next, trends in PCCD transfer rates are examined for the years 1977 through 1981, indicating a 31% decline in absolute numbers. The concluding section stresses the limited enrollment capacity of four-year institutions in California and the expanded mission of the CCC's as important elements of a current perspective on the transfer function. (LAL)

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THE ISSUE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFERS: PERALTA AND STATEWIDE

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Peralta Community College District
Office of Research, Planning and Development

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INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, a major function of the California Community Colleges (CCC) is to prepare students for transfer to a four year university or college. In a statewide longitudinal survey conducted by Stephen Sheldon of Los Angeles Pierce College, 36.2% of a sample of beginning CCC freshmen students responded that one of their objectives was to transfer to a four year college. However, the number of students transferring to CSU or UC schools as a percentage of total CCC enrollment was relatively low statewide (2.6% for fall, 1981), and even lower (1.4%) for the Peralta district. (See Table I)

FACTORS WHICH LOWER THE CCC TRANSFER RATE

All of the following have contributed to lower the community colleges' transfer rates: 1. The change in goals of potential transfer students towards more immediate employment, 2. The exclusion of statistics on student transfers to California's Independent Colleges and to out of state colleges, 3. The tremendous growth in CCC part time enrollment in the past decade and a half, and 4. The limited capacity of California's public four year colleges.

Many students are acquiring job skills at a CCC which leads them to seek immediate employment rather than to continue pursuing a four year degree. Even though the study by Stephen Sheldon of L.A. Pierce found that over a third of the sample of beginning freshmen wanted to transfer to a four year college, the same study found that many of these students drop out due to job conflict while also rating highly the CCC they attended. One could conclude that the California Community Colleges are providing students with job skills causing many students to change their goals towards more immediate employment.

The statewide figures compiled by the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) ommitted CCC transfers to independent private colleges, and transfers to colleges outside of California. CPEC is now attempting to remedy this situation. Some preliminary data gathered by CPEC indicates that about 100 students transferred from Peralta campuses to Independent California Colleges, increasing the total number of Peralta transfers from 590 to almost 700.

The Peralta student population has changed radically since the late 1960's and now includes more educated, more older and more part time students. About a fifth (17%) of the district's students have a B.A. degree or higher, and almost half (47%) of the district's students are thirty years old or older. Full-time students now constitute only 20% of the Peralta student body. Acknowledging the effect of proportionally few full-time students on the transfer rates of Peralta colleges helps to explain the low transfer rates. The transfer rate for the Peralta District rises to 8.4% when it is computed on the basis of the number of full-time students who transfer. The other community college districts in California are experiencing the same changes in the composition of their student bodies.

Finally, another factor which is not fully appreciated is

the limited enrollment capacity of California's four year colleges and universities which makes it impossible for them to admit many more CCC transfers. From the standpoint of California's four year public colleges, the community colleges

Table I

Bay Area Community College Transfers to UC and CSUC
Fall 1981

College	Enrollment	CSUC	UC	Total Transferred	Percent Transferred
Alameda	8,059	126	40	166	2.1
Feather River	1,272	34	1	35	2.8
Laney	12,303	131	43	174	1.4
Merritt	9,766	155	48	203	2.1
Vista	10,173	10	2	12	0.0
Peralta CCD	41,573	456	134	590	1.4
(w/o Vista)	31,400	446	132	578	1.8
Contra Costa	9,093	175	32	207	2.3
Diablo Valley	20,087	875	199	1,074	5.4
Los Medanos	5,760	71	9	80	1.4
Contra Costa CCD	34,940	1,121	240	1,361	3.9
Chabot (South County CCD)	21,026	483	67	550	2.6
Ohlone (Fremont-Newark CCD)	8,653	237	22	259	3.0
San Francisco CCD	68,630	816	95	911	1.3
S.F. (Credit only)	28,457	816	95	911	3.2
Foothill	15,838	404	124	528	3.3
DeAnza	26,772	547	100	647	2.4
Foothill-DeAnza CCD	42,610	951	224	1,175	2.8
San Mateo	16,283	511	104	615	3.8
Canada	9,435	132	28	160	1.7
Skyline	8,415	216	20	236	2.8
San Mateo CCD	34,133	859	152	1,011	3.0
San Jose City	14,747	243	5	248	1.7
Evergreen Valley	10,219	148	8	156	1.5
San Jose CCD	24,966	391	13	404	1.6
Solano (Solano CCD)	10,152	195	43	238	2.3
Marin	13,447	306	78	384	2.9
Indian Valley	5,637	95	12	107	1.9
Marin County CCD	19,084	401	90	491	2.6
STATE	1,355,226	30,026	4,778	34,804	2.6

are a plentiful source of transfer students. The figures in Table II indicate that the number of CCC transfers to the CSU system is in fact higher than the number of first time freshmen entering the CSUC system. In the fall of 1981, the number of CCC transfers to UC schools was 29% of their first time freshmen enrollment. The number of transfers appears to be very low only

Table II

Numbers of Community College Students Who Transferred To The University of California and the California State University Together with Numbers of First-Time Freshmen From California High Schools (1965-1981)

	Community College Transfer Students			First-Time Freshmen	
	Fall Term		Full Year	Fall Term Only	
Year	UC	CSU	CSU	UC	CSU*
1965	2,948	14,603	---	--	14,023
1966	3,761	19,295	---	12,341	15,574
1967	3,702	22,059	---	13,072	16,082
1968	3,785	26,596	---	11,665	18,844
1969	4,458	28,207	43,963	12,066	17,539
1970	5,166	29,059	49,245	13,233	18,984
1971	6,154	32,546	52,989	13,637	19,306
1972	7,165	34,619	53,820	14,358	22,094
1973	8,193	33,089	51,335	15,011	22,210
1974	7,813	32,646	51,144	14,915	22,886
1975	8,002	35,537	52,917	15,460	23,239
1976	7,123	32,653	51,230	14,935	23,498
1977	6,392	34,001	51,159	14,820	23,867
1978	6,193	31,609	47,430	15,850	24,668
1979	5,649	30,428	46,326	16,534	25,703
1980	5,428	30,490	46,649	16,340	25,470
1981	4,778	30,026	45,283	16,580	23,500

*Fall statistics represent about 90% of first-time freshmen who enter during the full year.

because of the large number of students attending the California Community Colleges. In fact, CCC enrollment is over three times as large as the combined enrollments of both UC and CSU. About 70% of California's high school graduates who go directly to college will be first time students at a CCC.

What is an acceptable level of community college transfers given the limited capacities of the UC and CSU systems? The answer depends upon whether or not the state systems can expand their enrollments to accommodate more community college transfers. If they are unable to expand enrollment, they will need to reduce admissions in other areas to make room for additional CCC transfers.

Some estimates of the impact of community college transfers on California's public four year colleges if transfer rates were greater are provided in Table III. A constant CCC enrollment at the fall 1981 level of 1,355,266 is assumed. Also, the student success rate is set at 75% (i.e. 75% of all CCC transfers make it to their senior year), which is approximately the current success rate for CCC transfers.

If the transfer rate were 5%, which is almost double the current rate, the number of students transferring to the CSU system every fall would be about two and one-half times the number of first-time freshmen, and CSU enrollment would need to increase by over 100,000 after two years, or about forty-one percent above the fall 1981 level of over a quarter of a million undergraduate students. For every .5% increase in the state transfer rate, CSU enrollment would increase by over 10,000.

In the final analysis, any estimate of what is a reasonable transfer rate must take into account the capacity of the four year colleges to accommodate more CCC transfers. Unless UC and CSU can increase their enrollments substantially, the figures in Table III reveal that the CCC transfer rate can not reasonably be expected to increase by more than one or two percentage points in the near future.

Table III

CCC Transfers to UC and CSU with Hypothetical Transfer Rates*

% Transfer	Transfer to:		Increase in Undergraduate Enrollment after two years			
			UC		CSU	
	UC	CSU	N	%	N	%
5.0	9,283	58,477	16,245	16.5	102,335	40.7
7.5	13,925	87,717	24,369	24.7	153,505	61.0
10.0	18,567	116,956	32,492	33.0	204,673	81.4

*Fall Term only

PERALTA COLLEGES VS. OTHER BAY AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The more urban-inner city community college districts transfer fewer students than do the more suburban and affluent community college campuses. Diablo Valley has the highest transfer rate (5.4%) of any community college in the Bay Area. Other Bay Area colleges that have high transfer rates are San Mateo College (3.8%) and Foothill College (3.3%).

Laney College has the lowest transfer rate of any of the Peralta campuses and possibly the lowest transfer rate in the Bay Area. It is not clear why Laney's rate is so low and some investigation needs to be done to determine the factors contributing to the low transfer rate. Alameda and Merritt colleges have higher transfer rates although they are still slightly below the state average. Feather River's transfer rate of 2.8% is slightly above the state average of 2.6%. Table I gives the enrollments, numbers tranferred and transfer rates for other Bay Area Community Colleges.

ETHNICITY OF JUNIOR COLLEGE TRANSFERS

On a percentage basis, fewer Blacks and more Whites transfer from the Peralta Community Colleges than are represented on the district's campuses, while Asians and Hispanics transfer roughly in proportion to their representation on the Peralta campuses. The CSU system admits a higher percentage of minority transfers than does the UC system. The data for the Peralta colleges is presented in Table IV where it is compared to the statewide averages.

Table IV

Ethnicity of Peralta College Transfers (Fall 1981)

Community College	Transfer to:	N	American Indian%	Asian %	Filipino%	Black %	Chicano%	White %	Unk %
Alameda	UC	40	0.0	12.8	2.6	17.9	10.3	56.4	2.5
	CSU	126	3.0	11.0	6.0	27.0	5.0	48.0	20.6
Feather River	UC	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
	CSU	34	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.8	5.9	82.3	0.0
Laney	UC	43	2.6	12.8	0.0	17.9	7.7	59.0	9.3
	CSU	131	2.1	13.5	1.0	38.5	9.4	35.4	26.7
Merritt	UC	48	0.0	16.3	0.0	20.9	14.0	48.8	10.4
	CSU	155	1.5	13.9	1.5	20.0	3.9	59.2	16.1
Vista	UC	2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
	CSU	9	0.0	0.0	0.0	40.0	0.0	60.0	44.4
State	UC	4,767	1.0	10.2	1.2	4.0	8.1	75.5	9.9
	CSU	29,991	5.6	7.1	1.3	6.4	8.4	71.2	16.3

TRENDS IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFERS

The trend in recent years has been for California Community College transfers to decline. (See Table II) Statewide transfers increased rapidly in the 1960's and stabilized somewhat during the 1970's. The number of UC transfers statewide began declining rapidly after 1975 (40% decrease between 1975 and 1981) while CSU transfers peaked in 1977 (12% decrease between 1977 and 1981). The Peralta district has also experienced a sharp decline in transfers since 1977. The annual transfers to UC and CSU for the Peralta District since 1977 are presented in Table V below.

Table V

Peralta Transfers

Year	Total Enrollment for Credit		Transfers to: UC		CSU	
	N	% Increase (Decrease)	N	% Increase (Decrease)	N	% Increase (Decrease)
1977	32,337		177		664	
1978	30,287	(6.3)	195	10.1	613	(7.7)
1979	33,263	9.8	164	(15.9)	542	(11.6)
1980	40,053	20.4	146	(11.0)	477	(12.0)
1981	41,573	3.8	134	(8.2)	456	(4.4)

The increase in enrollment since 1977 has been due largely to the increase in the number of part time students, while the number of full-time students has decreased by about 10% since 1977. The decrease in the number of full-time students has coincided with the decrease in transfers to four year institutions. However, a clear cause/effect relationship is not established at this time.

The absolute number of Peralta transfers has declined by 31% during the same period. Since the number of high school graduates has been declining, more eligible students have been enrolling directly as first time freshmen in the UC and CSU systems, leaving fewer eligible students for the California Community Colleges. This could account for part of the decrease in the number of transfers. The number of annual high school graduates is expected to decline further in the 1980's, increasing the prospects of future decreases in CCC transfers.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The present capacity of the CSU and UC systems to admit transfers is very limited. Because of the large number of CCC students (mostly part time and evening students) compared to the UC and CSU systems, it's unlikely that the statewide transfer rate could be increased by more than one or two percentage points in the near future. Despite the low CCC transfer rate, the com-

munity colleges are still an abundant source of students for the UC and CSUC systems as Table III demonstrates.

Eliminating the transfer function of the California Community Colleges would limit the educational oppurtunities available to disadvantaged youth. Many of these youth now need the supportive and community based education at the California Community College as a stepping stone in their educational development.

Also, it is probably unfair to unduly criticize the California Community Colleges for their low transfer rate. The California Community Colleges are an important source of students for the four year colleges, but their functions have now expanded into other areas such as adult education, improving students job skills, retraining for laid-off workers, self-improvement courses, and special programs for the aged and the handicapped. As enrollments expanded rapidly in the late sixties and seventies the role of the community college has changed also. The part-time working student who is taking a few courses to enrich his or her life or to improve job skills is now the rule, not the exception on the community college campus. For this reason, the transfer function must be viewed from a perspective which is very different from what was common in the past.

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